

HOME READING.

Rhoda Farrand.

BY FLEASER A. HUNTER.

It was a quiet day in the little village of Rhoda Farrand. The sun shone brightly on the green hills, and the birds sang sweetly in the trees. Rhoda Farrand, a young woman of gentle manners and a kind heart, was sitting in her parlor, reading a book. She was dressed in a simple, yet elegant, gown, and her hair was styled in a neat bun. The parlor was a cozy room, with a large fireplace and a comfortable sofa. Rhoda had just finished her morning prayers and was now enjoying a quiet moment of reading. She had heard that the new book she had bought was very interesting, and she was eager to read it. As she turned the pages, she was struck by the beauty of the language and the wisdom of the author. She felt as if she had found a friend in the book, and she was enjoying every word. The door opened, and a servant came in with a letter. Rhoda took the letter and opened it. It was from her mother, and it told her that she was to be married. Rhoda was surprised and happy. She had always loved her mother, and she was proud of her. She was now to be a wife and a mother. She felt a great responsibility, but she was ready to accept it. She wrote a quick reply to her mother and then went back to her book. She was so absorbed in her reading that she did not notice the time passing. The sun was now low in the sky, and the birds were singing their evening songs. Rhoda closed her book and looked out the window. She felt a sense of peace and contentment. She was happy in her home, and she was happy to be a part of the little village of Rhoda Farrand.

God chooseth the seasons. He does not scatter seed in the dust of summer, nor amid winter ice, yet the ice is needed, and the dust is needed; the summer to generate, the winter to store heat. At the right time, a thought comes floating down into our hearts, we know not from whence; maybe a tear falls next. God sends the tear as the seed-thought, and behold, a ripening soul. Then, perchance, we wonder why the growth was not earlier, why we did not learn sooner.

The time of the planting was not yet. The sower knoweth the field, and the weather, the soil and the sky. It is ours only to gather the sunshine and the raindrops, happiness, grief, weariness can be transmitted into a glory of leafage, a crown of blossoms and a wealth of fruitage. The dark earth hides the seed: even so grief develops. The storm-cloud beats in furious deluge: even so disaster quickens. The sunlight waxes: even so divinity beckons, and from deluge and darkness the soul, as the stalk, springs upward toward God.

Pretty Mrs. Hagens, with her quick and accurate habits, laid no time in setting about her new tasks; she was not one of those who do nothing well, but average tolerably on everything.

"If I had the flocks of twelve ewes, left from a white-cake, would I let them go to waste, because they were not the whites of the eggs? I would use them in custard, or omelet, or golden-cake. If I have nothing in the house but corn-meal, shall we go hungry because there is no flour, when corn bread and batter cakes may be prepared?"

"There is my music, for instance," continued this methodical housewife. "A good deal of time and money has been expended on it, but it is going to waste. I can never be a Rubinstein, but I am justified in throwing away the yaks because they do not float in pyramids of pearl under the beater? I have brought tears by my music many a time. Aunt Judith says she had rather hear me play than the whole College of Music. Tom has asked me to sing more than once when I was too busy or indifferent. Is not music as much a part of my home duties as arranging chairs?"

The sewing had laid aside. Mrs. Hagens went at once to the piano. So absorbed had she been in household affairs that she could not get over the feeling at once, that piano practice was a waste of time. But she struggled with her indisposition toward this use of the afternoon. She struck directly into her mother's favorite air. It was a simple thing. She hated to play it so often, and refused sometimes her mother this favor. "If she could come back and be with me again, she thought, with tears in her hazel eyes, I would sound the strains over and over, and never weary."

Who knows but the mother, even then, was in the peace of the daughter's beautiful home, listening to the songs and drawing sweeter music from the sorrowing woman's consciousness. How far do our departed lead us? A song-bird may waken our conscience. Why not as well an angel or a dear dead friend?

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That night Tom not only had his favorite dishes for supper, but his wife played in the parlor as entertaining as in the days of her courtship. Later, on account of the weather, he offered to read aloud, and the sewing, laid by in the afternoon, glided under her swift needle, and there came to be established a regular reading hour which they shared.

The daily paper, before skimmed because bread must be baked and the house swept, was perused with method, even to the stock market and political affairs. In time, from being merely a pretty woman and a good cook, she became also a woman of enlarged views and of practical piety. The found time for work in the Sunday-school, that led her into philanthropic work among poor children. Her reading of statistics, and her close study of her Sunday lessons, brought her all the time fresh food, and enlarged her interest.

Her persistent reading of the daily news kept her abreast with the times. Her hours of reading in the evening developed into a marvelous richness. Magazine literature she had always enjoyed, but now read no longer as before, merely for recreation. "How full the world is of things," was her frequent exclamation. She found time for her piano practice every day, generally in the gloaming, and the lives her daily touch brightened the latter day may reveal.

It is astonishing, as a woman's needs grow, how her time grows. About all of a mother's time is devoted to one child, but there be six, they are somehow equally well dressed and fed. Likewise, a woman may spend all her time over her house, but let other interests come to which her inclination is drawn, and she gets time for them all. Only needs the desire to double the hours.

If the enthusiasm, the heart-drawing, be there (as the mother love in the heart), no matter how many claimants, each succeeds in finding affection and care without drawing from the heart hold of the others.

So Mrs. Hagens' home did not become untidy because she visited poorer houses. Her parlor was stocked, although a portion was sent daily to the unfortunate. Monday was sandwiched between active duties: the visits of friends were utilized; they were her "sitting down rests." A pretty piece of fancy work was caught up during these rests. It served two purposes: the visit was usually prolonged, and her love for pretty things indulged, without taking from more pressing work.

Her heart became fuller and tenderer, her life broader, and the days so rich and long that she found an hour to give specially to God in reading, communing, asking guidance and recording precious things which, after she is gone, may speak to others.

And so, each year new fields open, avenues widen, earth shows grander heights. Her life is not ended yet. What its next goal will be I do not know, but it is a more rounded, helpful and perfect life than before those resolves came so strangely that winter day, when the snow flakes, and lodged beside the hearth.

Every woman can do some one thing better than others. Do the one thing well, but do not let it slip out of life as of little consequence. Do one work well, do, but believe not that one work unites you for excuses you from another: one mission yours, and all other ways closed. Do not be monotonous, abnormally developed in some facilities, deficient in others. Your life may not be great, but it should be symmetrical. The weight and not the size of fruit determines its value. Your sphere may not be large, yet within its bounds you should seek perfection. Because your mind is towering, there is no need to be poorly shod. Delighting in Plato, the duties remain of having whole hose add a dinner ordered. Persons who use the pen should pause to see that the inkstand is dusted. Women who aspire to public affairs, look well to their households. Women who desire wider orbits, be certain that no beam they could give out has been withheld.

WORDS OF WISDOM.

Whoever a man commandeth upon himself, let him not think that he is free for any time, for his thoughts will fly to it of themselves. A man's nature is to be led by his thoughts, and he is led by his thoughts to the one and the other. —Lord Bacon.

Mrs. Hagens was a notable housekeeper. There was neither waste nor want, speck nor stain, from the roof tiles to the paving stones. And tasteful, too, was Mrs. Hagens. Everybody exclaimed, "How pretty!" when they entered the home. Neither was the parlor handsome at the expense of the kitchen. Every drawer and closet was arranged with the precision of troops on parade. Linen sheets on this shelf, cotton ones on that. If one article had chanced in any of the contingencies of life to have changed places with another, a court-martial would have been ordered at once among household forces.

Mrs. Hagens sat, early in the New Year, clad in her afternoon dress of blue cashmere, her long white apron, fresh from home laundrying. The freight sparkled in the open grate. It was a brighter fire than her neighbors boasted. It seemed as if every little lump of coal had been dusted; the bars of the grate shone like silver; the fender was of polished steel, the brass railing bright as a diamond; the throat of the chimney was cleaned of soot, and red-colored every day before the kindling was laid. Mrs. Hagens' fire looked good enough to eat, and the fender a royal platter to serve it on.

Mrs. Hagens was sewing. A pair of pillow shams, just completed, had pulled too wide to suit the lady's eye. "A seam too wide," she had decided, after many looks and trials of them on the bed. It made no difference that they were only "a seam" too wide, and no difference that they were entirely finished. They must be all right. So

she ripped off the neat hand-over-cast ruffle, pared off the rolled edge, and began anew on her twelve yards of gathens.

The second thread had been unwound, and the end nicely tucked in the little vise on the spool's margin; no disheveled thread was ever seen in this lady's work basket. A thoughtful look overspread the face as she threaded the needle. Not another woman, in town, would have ripped out that work, once done, but it must be just right before she was suited.

"Do I take the same pains to have everything just right, mentally and morally?" queried the seamstress. "Would I trim off a shred of prejudice, as I have this ruffle, until I was sure the thing was exactly right before accepting it?"

That morning Tom had said admiringly: "Mary, you are the cleanest woman I ever knew." Her heart beat faster yet for her husband's praise. Her dainty collars, her fresh complexion, her trim slippers were a pride to the man who had won her.

"Am I the cleanest woman?" she now asked, doubtfully. "Am I as careful not to have a mean thought as a soiled collar? Is an unkind word as abhorrent as a ragged stocking? Are the chambers of my mind as well and fresh, and my brain as orderly and well filled as my pantry?"

"I have despised book-worms, frowns and half-clad. Am I as culpable? They have well stored minds but untidy dwellings. I have a well ordered home, but a slovenly mind. I have blamed those whose Christian zeal took them to church, regardless of the home-work. I have known persons to go when their beds were unmade and their every-day clothing lying in mounds on the floor. I keep my things hanging up, but my spirit robes are tarry. My beds are made, but the future is unprovided for. Then, too, she continued musingly, "about church-going. I go regularly, but somewhat as I would to a formal party; because I have no excuse for not going; not that I really want to go. Church is not to me a home gathering, a visit planned, sacrificed for and enjoyed in the Father's house."

I do not know why these thoughts should have come into Mrs. Hagens' mind this day for the first time. She was reckoned a good woman; she was a bright talker, a splendid housewife. Her home was lovely, her husband praised her, her health was superb, her friends legion. Everything was going on smoothly, as usual. The snow flakes drifted delightfully into the broad, clean stone window sills. The fire sipped and chattered with the freedom of a daily companion. Why should she, on this day, while she sat alone, supping the white ruffle, have felt that although as a housekeeper she was a success, as a woman she was a failure?

WHO CAN ANSWER?

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So, this poor blind girl—can you imagine one more bereft and helpless?—sisterless, motherless, penniless, a stranger, blind,—could only sing; sing in words none of her hearers understood, yet in her dark corner she was doing better work than we, blessed with health, friends and home.

Singing, baking, story-telling, sewing, giving up, caressing little children, not great acts certainly, but each giving of one's self to brighten the world is a flash of that divine illumination, faint and purely glowing, that spans the sky—a star-bow of the night—amid the planets' brightness. And remember, weak and timid one, that God never forgets, or quenches one ray once lighted. As often as the splendid constellations parade the heavens, the gauzy banners of the Milky Way are seen; and even in the moon's glow, the faint flutter of the little stars send encouragement to the multitudes of the earth, and from their crowded path across the zenith point upward, the while their beams fall on the awesome night.

F. H.

A Steep Hotel Bill.

AN INCIDENT OF THE FALMY DAYS OF THE CARPET-BAG REGIME.

"That man," said a South Carolina friend to me at the unveiling of the Henry statue last week, pointing out a comfortable-looking colored man, "is now a \$1,200 clerk in one of the departments here; but I remember very well when he paid \$12,000 for forty-five boards at a New York hotel; that's a pretty big hotel bill, bigger than any I ever paid." "How did it ever come about?" I asked, as we abandoned an attempt to hear a hallooing chorus which was being carried away from us by a strong wind at the rate of ten miles an hour. "It was during one of Governor Scott's administrations," he responded, "in the good old carpet-bag days. That fat looking darkey was then a thin, solemn student of divinity, temporarily serving the office of secretary of state of South Carolina. He was tolerably well educated, very well behaved and altogether a most amiable innocent. The smart man above him in the state government used to refer to him as 'the colored clerk' and to the conclusion that he was a good idea to refund all the state bonds in a new series of consols. There was to be \$6,000,000 worth of consols. I don't know how many bonds were to be refunded. Perhaps not so large an amount. I remember I had an idea that somebody would make something out of it, and that it would not be either Governor Scott or colored friend here, or the state of South Carolina. The state of South Carolina rejoiced at that time in a financial agent at New York, a very smart fellow by the way. It was through him that the consols were to be placed. Of course, each of these bonds had to be signed by the governor and countersigned by the secretary of state, and the latter had to put a great seal of the poor miserable state on every one of them. Our New York friend suggested that it would facilitate matters if the governor and secretary of state would bring the bonds and the seal to New York and do the signing and the sealing there. The governor was willing. The secretary had some scruples as to the propriety of carrying the great seal out of the state. But he finally came to the conclusion that that might be one way of serving one's country. So the agent went to a well-known New York hotel and engaged its handsomest suite for the governor and the secretary of state for South Carolina. The hotel keeper was glad to have such distinguished guests, especially as the agent told him that they wanted the best of everything, regardless of expense. The governor and the secretary of state of South Carolina arrived in New York at night. That fellow is light in color, as you see. The hotel-keeper received them with great cordiality, and they spent a very comfortable night. In the morning, though, the murder was out. The hotel-keeper stopped the agent in the hotel lobby. 'My dear sir,' he said, 'I can't keep that nigger in my hotel. I will lose all my other guests. He must go if he reports forty secretaries of state.' The agent reported this to Scott while the secretary was dressing. 'We've got to stay right here,' said the governor in substance. 'The secretary's homesick already. He's skittish. If we have to leave here we may have to tell him to go. We've got to stay right here. See here,' he said to the hotel man: 'You've got to stay right here. They'll keep in their rooms as much as possible; you can send their meals up, and I'll see that any loss you suffer

because of them is made good when you get away."

All right, said the hotel man, immediately calculating a good round sum for damages. So there they stayed for five days. All day long they were signing and sealing the secretary's hardly long, the significance of what he was doing. The secretary was treated royally. He did not drink, so the usual champagne tactics were not resorted to. But he liked good food, flowers, drives, books, music, and they gave him his fill. Kalakaua never lived any better than did this poor student for forty-five days. Then, the bonds having all been signed and sealed, the big seal was packed away in the secretary's trunk and the governor called for his bill. "It was paid without a word; so were all the other bills, and then the governor and the secretary of state rode away."

A blind girl, a Norwegian, unable to speak English, and without friend or relative (her parents having died just before she reached America), found her way into a State institution for the blind. There came a day, soon after, when the Governor and Legislature visited the school. There was a display of the best work and brightest pupils. Then this foreign blind girl was led out. Her hair was plaited in the fashion of her land; her eyes were closed. She was a stranger, and in the dark; but she had a divine gift. She sang a Norwegian hymn, a weird, haunting air that wailed and sighed like wind amid the rocky crags of the Northern sea. Her brow was illumined, her face thrown upward eagerly, she had forgotten her audience; she seemed once more to be on the bleak Norway hills, singing the songs of her humble youth. Men's eyes, as they listened, were dim. Women wiped away fast-gathering tears. Every visitor is better to this day for that poor girl's song. Thackeray, cynic though he was, tells of a deformed child, who cried out that he could do nothing, he was so little and weak. But the Lord's angel smiled on the child and said: "You can sing—poor little thing. Dear little child—you can sing."

So, this poor blind girl—can you imagine one more bereft and helpless?—sisterless, motherless, penniless, a stranger, blind,—could only sing; sing in words none of her hearers understood, yet in her dark corner she was doing better work than we, blessed with health, friends and home.

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F. H.

Some of the Big Gold Nuggets.

On August 18th, 1860, a large piece of gold was taken from the Monumental Quartz Mine, Sierra Buttes, which weighed 1,596 ounces troy, the value of which was estimated at \$21,000 to \$30,000. The nugget was sold to H. B. Woodward, of San Francisco, for \$21,636.52. A fine specimen was taken from the Rainbow Quartz Mine, Chipp's Flat, in 1881. It was taken from a depth of 200 feet. Later it was shipped to London and worked there. It yielded \$22,000. In 1855 a nugget was found at French Ravine that weighed 532 ounces, and was worth \$10,000. A nugget is reported to have been found from Minnesota valued at \$5,000. In 1850 a piece of gold quartz was found in French Ravine which contained 263 ounces of gold, worth \$4,893. At Smith's Flat, in 1866, a piece of gold was taken from a claim which was worth \$2,716, and weighed 146 ounces. At Smith's Flat, in 1864, a nugget was found weighing 140 ounces and worth \$2,605. At Little Grizzly Diggings, in 1869, a nugget worth \$2,000 was found. A nugget of 94 ounces and valued at \$1,770 was found at the Hope claim, four miles below the Mountain House. At French Ravine, in 1860, a nugget was found worth \$1,757 and weighing 93 ounces. At Smith's Flat, in 1861, a nugget was found which weighed 80 ounces and was valued at \$1,509. From 1854 to 1862 twelve gold nuggets, ranging from 30 to 147 ounces, were taken from the Live Yankee claim at Forest City. From 1856 to 1862 a number of gold nuggets, varying from 30 to 100 ounces, were found in the Oregon claim at Forest City. A specimen worth \$5,000 was taken from the Oriental (Gold Gate) quartz mine.

Not Such a Villain, After All.

Soon after we left Meridian, on the way across to Vicksburg, a solemn-looking chap came into the smoker and grumbled and gumbled and took on like a man terribly distressed; and when we asked him where he seemed to feel the worst, he replied: "Gentlemen, there is a powerful good looking young woman in the next car, and she has fallen into the hands of a human hyena."

"No!" shouted three or four voices at once. "Yes, indeed. He's a wicked looking wolf in sheep's clothing. If I mistake not he represented some New England machinery house. He's a squeezing of her hand and a whispering of his love, and the giddy thing has fallen right into the trap. I couldn't bear to see it any longer, and so I came in here. Gentlemen, some of you have daughters!"

Yes, there were three of us who had daughters ranging from two to seven years old, and we were honest enough to admit it. "Just think of your daughters being kajoyleed by a Philistine!" he continued. "He's talking and flattering and promising, and she's somebody's daughter. Gentlemen, something or other he did."

We agreed. We all lounged in and saw that she was a good looking, happy faced girl of twenty, and we returned and held an

Artemus Ward in New Orleans. What was the question, Colonel? I wished it put to Freddy Browne," said the proprietor, whose ruddy countenance shone with pleasure. "Well, simply this: partly for my own satisfaction and partly to answer those who have asked me the question. Pray, Mr. Browne, did you fight against us during the war?"

This was uttered in all sober earnestness. We felt that it was out of place, and yet we couldn't help admiring the Colonel's genuine honesty and simplicity of purpose and feeling.

Artemus's eyes twinkled, though his face was composed and his manner serious, as he answered: "Since I came South, Colonel, I have been frequently asked that question. Permit me to answer it in my own fashion." He drew himself up, and folded his arms. We drew closer around him, anxious to hear the humorist for once express himself seriously.

"I did my duty faithfully, Colonel, by sending my substitute to the war. I have never met him since. Doubtless, he will yet return to his family's bosom, to draw a pension in my place. I was, therefore, excused from further active service. But I always openly proclaimed it"—here he was exceedingly impressive—"that as long as General Lee kept away from me, I would keep away from him. I would never go after him. But I said, nevertheless, repeatedly and without concealment, that if ever General Lee and his fifty thousand men came marching up into New York State, where my old mother and I lived on my humble homestead, and General Lee was to order his fifty thousand men to attack my homestead, I did say, as I said before, that I would send my old mother to the rear, and I would take down my grandfather's old musket, and I'd load her up with buckshot, and then I'd send General Lee word; and if he and his fifty thousand men didn't retreat, I would attack every man of them, and follow them to the Potomac! And you see, Colonel, General Lee must have heard of this, for he never once came near me!"

Amid the burst of laughter which followed, he departed, and I never saw him again.—*Orleanian, in the Manhattan for the Centinel.*

Contempt to Kill.

Old Uncle Isaac, the well known colored rapsicker, has just made his appearance after having been confined to his house for several days.

"Where have you been?" asked the *Critic* this morning. "I haven't seen you for a long time."

"Oh, I've been recuperating after dat argument I had wid de Washington boys."

"What argument?"

"Why, dat 'ligious argument we had las' week, when de biggest Washington boy called me a liar, and sed dat I was ole and ignorant. Den I jess gub him one, and dat sneakin' Jim Washington hit me 'cross de back wid a fence palm."

"And you've been to bed?"

"Yes, sur, jess got out dis mornin', and de facts ob dat argymint haint worn off yet. But I wain't go now to Jedge Snell for to git a warrant for all ob dem dems."

"What will you charge them with—getting the best of an argument?"

"No, sah, dat I slant; I shall charge dem wid insult; wid contempt ter kill."

"Yes, Sah."

Yes, sah. We quite agree with you, sah, that there is a sort of delicious frankness, sah, about the following that will be appreciated beyond the bounds of West Virginia.

Some five or six years ago, when the Greenback party held at least some strength in the West and South, one of their Columbian orators delivered an address for his party at Winfield, Putnam county, West Virginia. When in the zenith of his oration he was stopped by a powerful voice among the listeners.

"Look hear, sah! May I ask you a question, sah?"

"Yes, sah, you may."

"Well, sah; I want to know, sah, if you are not the man, sah, that I had down here in jail, sah, for hog stealing, sah?"

"Yes, sah, I am, sah," came the response; "but I got clarr, sah."—*Harper's Drawer.*

An esteemed citizen of East Saginaw stepped to his front door last Sunday morning to get his paper. The wicked carrier had flung it far from the porch and the citizen, clad only in his shirt, looked furtively about and seeing no one in sight made a dash for the newspaper, but the door closed behind him with the night latch spring. As his wife was asleep up stairs, the racket he was compelled to make to arouse her to let him in also aroused the neighborhood, and that part of the population who witnessed the scene have not yet ceased blushing.

A new parlor and sleeping car has no aisle running through the centre. Instead there is a corridor at the side, into which the doors of the various compartments open. The sofas with which the compartments are furnished are at night transformed into beds. The beds are made up with the head next the corridor partition, "bringing the vital parts of the body in the middle of the car, a safer position than along the sides of the windows." The beds are longer than those of other cars.

An Unfortunate Family.

The Lampton family is in one respect one of the most unfortunate in Anatin. They have lost by death five or six children, but the births are pretty much in ratio of the deaths, so that the family is far from being childless. A few weeks ago there was another death in the family, and the undertakers' assistant called at the house.

A small boy met him at the door. "Is your pa in?"

"What do you want to see him about?"

"I want to ask him when the funeral will take place."

"You needn't see him then at all, if that is all you want. I can tell you, that. Pa always buries us at 4 o'clock in the afternoon."

To make a political application of the foregoing, we make remark that Mr. Dana need not interest himself about the funeral of the next Democratic candidate. It is a habit of the Democracy to inter a favorite son once every four years, and it may also be said, that it is almost impossible for the funeral to come off without the New York

San having a part in furnishing the corpse. At least that is the way the friends of General Hancock look at the situation.

Lundborg's Perfume, Edenia. Lundborg's Perfume, Marchal Niel Rose. Lundborg's Perfume, Alpine Violet. Lundborg's Perfume, Lily of the Valley.